

B2 Reading comprehension questions

Plans for smoking law to stop UK youth buying cigarettes

England's young smokers could be denied access to cigarettes under a new policy by UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. The proposal would raise the legal age for buying cigarettes by one year every year, starting from 2026. People must be 18 or over to legally buy cigarettes in the UK. But if the tough measure goes ahead, then anyone currently in their mid-teens may never be able to buy cigarettes.

The restriction would be implemented in England only, not the rest of the UK. The last time the minimum age limit for buying cigarettes was changed in the UK was in 2007, when it was increased from 16 to 18. Sunak's government said that the 2007 change that targeted the youth saw a 30% major reduction in 16- and 17-year-olds smoking.

In total, smoking rates have declined by 66% since the 1970s, but there are around 6.4 million UK citizens who still buy cigarettes. Meanwhile, vaping has tripled in popularity since 2000, officials say. Now, instead of adolescent children smoking, they are developing a vaping addiction. It is also illegal in the UK to sell vapes to under-18s.

Mr Sunak said he wants to end the UK's "biggest cause of preventable death and disease". He said four in five smokers start before they are 20, and that later "the vast majority try to quit". In a speech he gave about stopping teenagers from taking up smoking, he gave a slogan-like remark to "stop the start" of the deadly habit.

1. What is Rishi Sunak's proposal?
2. Who will the smoking ban affect first?
3. What part of the UK will the law affect?
4. What happened in 2007?
5. After 2007, the government saw a big cut in what?
6. Have smoking numbers gone up or down since 1970?
7. How much has vaping gone up since 2000?
8. Can children buy vapes in the UK?
9. Did Mr Sunak say 80% of smokers try to quit?
10. How is Mr Sunak's "stop the start" comment described?

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Answers

1. Annually increasing the age a person can legally buy cigarettes.
2. People currently in the middle of their teenage years.
3. Only England.
4. The legal age limit for buying cigarettes was increased by two years.
5. New young smokers.
6. They've declined.
7. Three times as much.
8. Not legally.
9. No; most try to stop he said.
10. As a catchy slogan.

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<https://www.everybitenglish.com/lesson-20231020-upper-intermediate-b2-smoking-law>